

The Vedagamas imparted by Siva are to be divided into Karma Kanda and Gnana Kanda. Karma Kanda deals mainly with ceremonial rituals and is not of much importance to the student of philosophy. Gnana Kanda deals with the Upanishads and the Vedanta. While the Upanishad portion of the Gnana Kanda deals with the deification of particular objects such as the sun and moon as Brahman, the Vedanta portion or Sivagama deals with Siva as the only Brahman, and explains the particular objects mentioned in the Upanishads as mere partial manifestations of Brahman. Leaving the thantric portion out of consideration,⁽¹⁾ the Sivagamas are twenty-eight in number.

Tradition has it that Nandhi learned these twenty-eight Sivagamas from Srikanta. Evidently confused with certain conflicting principles in the various Sivagamas, Nandhi worshipped Srikanta and asked which was the true one. Srikanta pronounced that the Rourava Agama Sutras were the true ones and imparted their lore to Nandhi. From the time of Nandhi there has been a regular succession of master and pupil, the former imparting and the latter learning and imparting in turn, until the reader is carried swiftly on to the band of Sishyas within the impregnable walls of the Thiruvaduthurai Mutt: thus Sanatkumara, Sri Meikanda Deva, Arulnandhi Sivacharya, Maraignanasambanda Sivacharya, Umapathi Sivacharya, Arulnamasivaya Desigar, Namasivayamurthi, and the Gurumoorthi one after another of the Thiruvaduthurai Mutt⁽²⁾.

The philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta is to be found first in Sivagnana Botham by Sri Meikanda Deva. The principles contained therein are further amplified and illustrated in the thirteen other Siddhanta Sastras. They are Arulnandhi Sivacharya's "Sivagnana Siddhiar" and "Irupa Irupakthu"; Manavasagam Kadanthar's "Unmaivilakkam"; Uyyavanda Devar's "Thiruvundiar" and "Thirukalitrupadiar"; Umapathi Sivacharya's "Sivaprakasam," "Unmainerivilakkam," "Kodikavi," "Viva Venba," "Nenjuviduthuthu," "Sankarappanirakaranam," "Potripahrodai," and "Thiruvapurtpayan." Sivagnana Swamigal's commentary and Bhashya are invaluable. None of these thirteen sastras is translated into English and are all written in high-class Tamil.

The question whether Sivanana Botham is Aryan or Dravidian in origin is very difficult to decide. Certain orthodox writers of the Saiva Sect, such as Prof. T. Sundaram Pillai, Pandit D. Savarirayan, T. Ponnambalam Pillai, and Virudhai Sivagnana Yogigal, hold that the Tamil Sivagnana Botham is earlier in origin than the Sanskrit Sivagnana Botham, that the latter is derived from the former, and

(1) This is very wise. Yoga practices given in Sivagamas and all known tantric works are dangerous and to be avoided. In the development of Raja Yoga no extant works made public are of the least good; they can at best give inklings of Hatha Yoga, something that may develop mediumship, which is dangerous, at best, and in the worst case—consumption.—Eds.

(2) This is reminiscent of the Bhagavad-Gita, IV, 1-3, The Mundaka Upanishad, I, 4-5, and other Sanskrit texts. It is a well-known idea of the old world that Wisdom was handed down the generations by teacher to pupil, who became teacher in his turn to other pupils.—Eds.